41 Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mr. William Saunders

GOING TO NEW YORK IS AN ADVANTAGE AND A DISADVANTAGE

593 464 199 Most people think about their kids. It's so hard raising kids in New York. And it's so easy for kids to go bad there. So most of the kids are left here with the grandparents while the parents are in New York working, and when they get a certain age they think about it. And they rebel. They find something bad to do. They try to get back somehow at their parents.

(855) (603) *Most* of the people that go away from here leave their kids. If the wife and the husband are going to be working, they have nobody to care for the kids, so they leave them home. And the grandparents have gotten to a certain age, they raised their kids, and they're so much more lenient on their grandkids than they were on their own kids. So this is one of the real big problems, I think. The kids suffer.

855 603 199 (593) I was born in New York. I was one of these babies that was shipped here—not even somebody bringing me, they used to put tags on you and just put you on the train and say where you're supposed to get off at. I was raised by my grandparents and actually when a grandparent raise a kid, there are two generations between, and there's so much less understanding there. Things that the parents would probably understand, the grandparents cannot understand. And this was my problem.

This is something that is still going on, and I think it's gonna be going on and on. And this is one of the things that the Negroes have really been suffering from—this grandparents raising the children and the children not getting actually what they need. I believe if a kid really wants something, like he wants music lessons or he wants to study farming, or anything, if they say that they *want* to do it, I think that somebody should be there to help them with it. So even if they fail, they can't say, "I didn't have the opportunity." I think he should have the right to try, and if he fails, he can't blame nobody but himself because he just couldn't make it.

But like me now, I can sit back and blame my grandparents and my parents for not being successful. I don't know, I just feel to me that I could have been somebody. And I got somebody to blame for not being somebody.

Kids here need an opportunity.

464 199 855 Going to New York is a disadvantage and an advantage. To live I think it's a disadvantage. Some things are lacking here, but the children have a home. So we don't have everything that we want for them. But they have their home, so all they need is to get along like everybody else—daily living.

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Babies are passed over the coffin of ancestors during burial rites.

Children born feet first are gifted and able to manipulate binding constraints.

Children may be named according to season of birth, birth order, and of birth date.[18]

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In a more recent research effort Kiser suggests that grandparents assume a major responsibility in the Sea Island family.[19] This investigation suggests that the role of grandparents was primarily due to: (a) the migration of younger parents to urban cities while leaving behind offsprings to the care and rearing traditions of grandparents, (b) the seasonal employment patterns whereby the parent temporarily leaves the Island in search of jobs on the mainland.

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Undoubtedly these factors do act as antecedents, however, the extent to which this behavior is affected by cultural tradition has not been entertained. Hence it is uncertain whether the status accorded elder Sea Islanders and their family roles are primarily related to environmental factors or more so to the survival of West African cultural elements. There is reason to suggest that the functioning of elders in the Sea Island family and

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[18] Herskovits and F. S. Dahomey, Life in the Haitian Valley (2 vols.; New York: 1937-1938).

[19] Vernon Kiser, Sea Island to Urban Centers (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1932).

121 have left the island, or they maintain separate households.
861 The end result might mean greater uniformity in discipline
596 attitudes among Sea Islanders in general and particularly those in extended family situations.

121 The most uniform discipline patterns may occur in
861 families where mothers have clearly defined discipline
593 roles, and when grandparents are members of the household.
596 While the more common report that maternal grandparents are
603 generally more involved in the rearing of grandchildren than paternal grands, the presence of either grandparents in the household may result in more uniform application of discipline punishment(s).[20] Despite reports that grandparents tend to reject roles as disciplinarians of grandchildren, in the Black extended family situation grandparents may be much more active in this role. If the mother has no, or has an inconsistent discipline role, maternal grandparents may tend to be more permissive than paternal grandparents. This assumption is based upon the generally closer affiliation and attitudinal similarities between mother and her parents than between father and his parents. As a general view both paternal and maternal male grandparents may tend to be more restrictive of grandchildren than female grandparents. This trend would tend to be effected and modified

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[20] Edward Apple, The Social Structure of Grandparenthood, Amer. Anthropologist 58 (1956) 56-63.

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121 in light of mother's discipline role.[21] As an overall
861 judgement, extended families may tend to have the more
593 restrictive discipline pattern. This assumption is based
596 on the relationship between family living space and disci-
603 pline behavior. Sea Island homes tend to be small and confining which should allow for further test of this relationship.

121 Isolated Sea Island parents may use physical punish-
861 ment in disciplining more than parents living nearer to
621 mainland. This tendency may be anticipated for two reasons: (1) Sea Islanders may occupy lower positions on the socio-economic scale than mainland parents, (2) Sea Island communities are cohesively structured. This community cohesiveness is reflected in their practice of the discipline philosophy of two for one. Under this practice any misbehaving child can be disciplined by any member of the community. As the practice goes, after disciplining the child, the neighbor reports the child's misbehavior to the parent. The parent in turn has the responsibility of thanking the neighbor for a good deed. After which the child is again beaten on two accounts: (1) because of the misbehavior and (2) because the child's misbehavior has cast "bad light" on the parent.

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[21] R. S. Tach, The Role of the Father in the Family, Journal of Experimental Education, 20, 1952, 319-361.